

The First 50 Years

by James F. Keefe

Missouri Department of Conservation
Jefferson City

*This book is dedicated to
my wife "Dink"
Doris Jeanne Royse Keefe
who tended the homefires
while Z fought conservation s
battles. Then she fought a
few battles of her own,
and helped make possible
the Design for Conservation.*

*The endsheets are a photographic
reproduction of the poster used in
the 1936 campaign to create the
Conservation Commission of the
State of Missouri.*



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Foreword

I had just completed thirty-four years with the Department when I mentioned to Director Larry R. Gale that it was about time for me to retire. Larry knew that the Department would be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 1986-87 and suggested that before I retired I ought to write a history about the Department, to be brought out during the anniversary year.

I frankly didn't want to take on that chore. I was (and am) all too aware of my shortcomings as an historian. True, I had been a participant in thirty-four of the Department's years, but that did not necessarily equip me to be its historian. But I talked the idea over with friends and every one of them urged me to do it. Then I got a note from Imelda Scheppers, who had recently retired as Commission secretary. She urged me to write the history. That did it.

I discussed the project with Larry, and with Allen Brohn who had been my immediate boss for a good many years and whose counsel I value. We agreed that I should be relieved of my duties as Information officer so I could devote full time to the task of getting down on paper something of the events and the people who made up the Department during its first half-century. The Commission endorsed the project and I was relieved as Information officer and attached to Larry's staff July 1, 1985.

It was agreed that the selection and perception of things to include would be mine, subject only to Larry Gale's veto—a committee can't write a history. It was also agreed that I wouldn't do a white-wash of the agency; if there were warts, I'd be free to include them. With those things decided I set to work.

Using the minutes of the meetings of the Conservation Commission, the annual reports of the Department, and the state manuals (the Blue Books), I drew up a chronology of events that makes up Part II of this history. Preparation of the chronology gave me some perspective for writing the narrative history

that is Part I. The two parts complement each other, but each can stand alone.

Both the chronology and the narrative were enriched by interviews with former commissioners and employees, and a few people outside the Department. Especially helpful in giving me the feel of the times and events were: Kenneth M. Babcock, James L. Bailey, J. Vernon Bennett, Jim Tom Blair III, Frank P. Briggs, Allen Brohn, Charles H. Callison, Millard K. Chapman, Cleval Corey, Bill T. Crawford, Robert G. DeLaney, A. Hugh Denney, Virginia Dunlap, William H. Elder, John L. Funk, Larry R. Gale, Leonard Hall, Bettye Hornbuckle Gibson, Townsend Godsey, Milton G. Hoyer, Joseph Jaeger Jr., Lisle Jeffrey, Paul B. Johnson, Carl R. Noren, Charles A. Purkett Jr., Richard H. Rotsch, Leonard Rowe, C. Dan Saults, Charles W. Schwartz, Jack A. Stanford, Ed Stegner, William E. Towell, A. Reed Twichell and Ray M. Wells.

I received considerable assistance from various staff members of the different divisions and sections but want to especially acknowledge Everett E. Clark, Aaron R. Chapman, George P. Dellinger, Dan F. Dickneite, Francis E. Eyman, James P. Fry, John V. Frye, Edwin H. Glaser, Kerwin F. Hafner, Donald K. Heard, Charles E. Hooker, David D. Hurlbut, Malcolm K. Johnson, Samuel B. Kirby, John B. Lewis, Al Palladino, Roger E. Ponder, Jerry J. Presley, Jo Radmacher, Lee C. Redmond, James P. Rocca, Mark H. Sullivan, James R. Whitley, John E. Wylie and special thanks to Cheryl Baslee, Janet Henderson, Carolyn Lootens and Joann Thessen.

One of my biases is the appreciation I have for the clerical and service people of the Department, who get no mention when the kudos are passed around, but who really are the glue that holds the entire operation together. Especially valuable have been the section and division secretaries who help keep things rolling, year after year. They, too, had the zeal and dedication that helped make the Department what it is. Listed below are those

with at least twenty-five years service:

Dorothy K. Bloomfield (Fisheries) 37 years, Marjorie T. Elliott (Forestry) 30 years, Lydia M. Goldammer (Information) 28 years, Bonnie (Huddleston) Hart (Wildlife) 26 years, Nova M. **McNew** (Personnel) 29 years, Audrey E. **Mahan** (Protection) 30 years, Josephine A. Radmacher (Administration) 30 years, Imelda M. Scheppers (Administration) 31 years, Teresa M. **Schwartz** (Administration) 31 years and Margaret (Peggy) Thompson (Protection) 30 years.

They, and the rest of the support staff, all merit a special salute, too.

Lastly I want to acknowledge the contributions of my editor Kathy Love and my designer June Hunzeker who took these thousands of words and tried to make a book out of them. In addition, the efforts of my typesetters, Mitzi Crump and Bertha Bainer, and graphics technician Kevin Binkley, are gratefully acknowledged, as well as photography staffers Jim Rather-t and Dawn Drainer for their assistance with illustrations.

I am not a professional historian and I have been an actor in this history that I write. As such, it isn't entirely possible for me to be detached and dispassionate. My editor has winnowed out a lot of *we's* that I inadvertently wrote-since I won't ever be able to detach myself completely from the Department of Conservation. I hope she caught them all. But as an actor in the drama, I bring to this task some personal biases as to what I perceive to be important or interesting. My lack of professional training in history writing will be evident to any professional historian. My biases will be evident to any other member of the Department of Conservation, and there is nothing I can do about either.

I hope that I have brought to the reader something of the flavor, the sense of mission, the zeal that has been a hallmark of the Missouri Department of Conservation these past fifty years. I hope that same determination and zeal lasts another fifty years.

J. F. K.